

RECOGNITIONS

Jeffrey Kessler Named Among Law360's 2022 Sports & Betting MVPs of the Year

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Law360 has named Jeffrey Kessler, co-executive chairman of Winston & Strawn, as one of their 2022 Sports & Betting MVPs of the Year. For 12 consecutive years, Law360 has chosen their MVPs by evaluating which attorneys have had the biggest wins and made the most significant contributions to their practice group over the previous year.

As a Huffington Post feature on Jeffrey's career noted, he has a "reputation as one of the nation's pre-eminent sports lawyers – a bulldog attorney willing to [fight for] virtually any athlete who felt [they'd] been wronged by the league." Jeffrey did just that while representing college athletes in their antitrust challenge (*Alston*) against the NCAA before the Supreme Court, where after his oral argument, he secured a unanimous decision that many media (e.g., The Athletic, WaPo) and industry players believe portends "that the NCAA's rules that restrict any type of compensation—including direct payment for athletic accomplishments—might no longer be able to survive future antitrust challenges." This is illustrated by the fact that the NCAA has already been forced to suspend most of its restrictions on NIL rights in response to the *Alston* decision.

Beyond his industry-changing *Alston* win, his recent successful resolution of the World Cup-winning USWNT members' equal pay and working conditions fight, his representation of college athletes in the *House* NIL class litigation, his high-profile role as injunctive class counsel for professional swimmers in their antitrust challenge against FINA, his shepherding of Relevent through its FIFA/USSF antitrust battle, and his win in staving off a preliminary injunction in the WME dispute with Excel, Jeffrey's other notable sports-related career highlights include: *McNeil vs. NFL* (led to the establishment of free agency in the NFL) and *Brady v. NFL* (led to the end of the 2011 NFL lockout). Jeffrey has represented the NFLPA and its players in such prominent matters as "Deflategate" (involving Tom Brady); "Bountygate" (involving the New Orleans Saints); and the discipline disputes involving Ray Rice, Ezekiel Elliot, Adrian Peterson and, most recently, Deshaun Watson. He also represented the National Basketball Players Association in the antitrust litigation leading to free agency in the NBA, in the discipline arbitration for Latrell Sprewell, and currently, as legal advisor in collective bargaining negotiations.

On the *pro bono* front, Jeffrey successfully represented disabled athlete Oscar Pistorius in his successful arbitration for the right to compete against non-disabled athletes in the London Olympics, and Caster Semenya in her battle to compete in international track and field. He is now representing Nigerian bobsledder Simidele Adeagbo in her fight for gender equality in her sport.

[Read Jeffrey's Law360 MVP profile.](#)

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